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January 2012

Volume 7, Issue 1

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Special points of interest:

- Next Clinicals
 - February 17
 - March 16
 - April 20
- Be sure to check out the hyperlinks.



What Price Government?

— Walter E. Lowell



Ken Miller recently wrote about government as noble work. Noble because the work is hard, frequently maligned by

the public, and, despite what you may hear, government workers generally are not buying many condos in Maui.

Noble or not, there would be no civilization without government. Peaceful human cooperation is a prerequisite for prosperity, and government's purpose is to assure this peace -- government is both necessary and beneficial in this regard.

As Continuous Improvement Practitioners, we recognize the value of cooperation and collaboration in systems improvement. This is a central tenet of the sciences of improvement and, coupled with the concurrence and division of labor, drives the engine of economic progress.

Government arose as a means to cope with the inherent imperfection in many -- perhaps the majority of -- people. Since we are not all saints and angels, peaceful human cooperation is only assured, in the end, through coercion and force, a less noble function of government.

This is the paradox of government, it can ennoble us in peace or oppress in tyranny. Thus, it comes as no surprise that citizens have significant investment in assuring good government.

But assuring good government begs the question: What is good government? And a further question: How do know when we have it?

At minimum, we can make the case made above: good government bestows peace which in turn fosters prosperity.

As citizens we are invested in both, for peace and prosperity provide the opportunity for life, liberty, and happiness.

However, despite attempts to the contrary, we cannot buy good government.

It is created through enlightened leadership of both the governed and the governors. It is a much sought after future state, as is any in the process improvement work we, as CI-Ps, do. And, as with any process, it too requires continuous effort.

The more government does the greater is the risk that it imperils the very nature of its purpose.

— *cont'd on page 4*

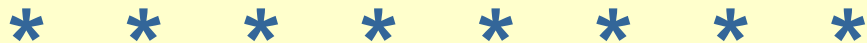
Printed & Other Matters

The Public Sector, Disrupted *Government needs the kind of innovation that allows us to really get more for less*

by William D. Eggers & Ruben Gonzalez | January 18, 2012
Governing Magazine | Management Insights

“Budget cutting in government is typically an exercise in using the blunt instrument of across-the-board cuts—in other words, doing more of the same with less money. The inevitable result, however, is not more for less but less for less. To get more for less requires doing things differently. Needed are innovations that break traditional tradeoffs, particularly between price and performance. Disruptive innovation offers a path to accomplish this goal and in the process transform public services.”

<http://www.governing.com/columns/mgmt-insights/col-government-disruptive-innovation.html>



Beyond Lean *Building Sustainable Business and People Success through New Ways of Thinking*

By Jamie Flinchbaugh

Deeper thinking about what we’ve learned from Toyota, using principles and rules — not tools. Probing deeper.

[Beyond Lean—Free Download](#)

BTC Lean Schedule

Date	Time	Topic	Location	Contact
Feb. 6-10	8:15-5:00	DOP 1-7	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JR/JK/ASD
Feb. 17	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
March 16	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
April 20	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
May 18	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
June 15	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
July 20	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
August 17	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
Sept 21	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK
Oct 19	8:15-4:30	Clinical Supervision	221 State, Lean Lab	WEL/JK

* To add or see more events or detail, go to the Bend the Curve Calendar in Outlook’s Public Folders.

Printed & Other Matters

If We Can Put a Man on the Moon...Getting Big Things Done in Government.

William D. Eggers & John O'Leary. Harvard Business Press: Boston MA. 2009. pp13-15,17,21

"If every public effort were as successful as the Marshall Plan, this book wouldn't be necessary. What our analysis showed is that the potential for failure lurks at every phase along the journey to success. In researching hundreds of large undertakings, we identified seven recurring pitfalls, traps that can bedevil any significant change effort in the public sector. Unfortunately, these traps do not announce themselves with trumpets blaring. The most dangerous aspects of the journey come from the hidden snares embedded in the terrain of the public sector.

... The traps are hidden. The system is invisible. You can't touch a process. It's often hard to detect the factors that make executing a large initiative in the public sector so difficult, and often so deadly....Today, the systemic causes of public failures — and even of many successes— cannot be seen....People aren't inclined to believe in things they can't see, touch, or smell....Eschewing a partisan or ideological line, we've tried instead to approach our task like detectives or forensic scientists. We asked questions that forced us to probe beneath the surface."

The Seven Deadly Traps

Consider: How does this relate to your practice as a CI-P ?

The Tolstoy Trap — *Most often occurs at idea phase.*

"...we see only what we are looking for, often while staying blind to what is really in front of us. Our preexisting mental maps [mindset] prompt us all...to discover in the world exactly what we expect to find. The Tolstoy syndrome causes enormous problems in execution." "...this book looks at ideas from a process perspective, focusing on the practical question of whether an idea is implementable and efficacious. From a process perspective, it is these second-order ideas, ideas about how government works and how the world works, that determine whether a policy idea put into practice will be successful or not. An examination of this nature does depend on facts. Unfortunately, 'facts' do not speak for themselves. Too often, evidence that doesn't fit our preconceived notions about the world is ignored."

The Design-Free Design Trap — *Most often occurs at the design phase.*

"Many legislators and other public officials don't see the legislative process as a design process. Most policy ideas go straight from the idea stage to drafting of legislation without ever going through the exacting design process and business case analysis that occurs for nearly every good or service launched in the private sector. Overcoming this trap requires a fundamentally different mindset, one based on designing policy for implementation first and foremost and passage through the legislature second."

The Stargate Trap — *Occurs only at Stargate phase & is especially challenging in the public sector.*

"...refers to the democratic commitment point, separates the 'political' universe of policy development from the 'bureaucratic' universe of implementation. The trap is the distortion effect created by this unique phase—the most unpredictable stage of the journey. The risk is that your idea never makes it through the Stargate or is so distorted that the initiative will never achieve the intended results. The challenge is to get through with your integrity intact, your idea recognizable, and a design that can actually be implemented."

The Overconfidence Trap — *Occurs anytime but most often during implementation phase.*

"...failure is always an option. Those who fall into the Overconfidence Trap dismiss those who advise caution, consider only the best-case scenarios, and plan with unrealistic budgets and impossible time lines. The best way to avoid the Overconfidence Trap is to take the possibility of failure seriously—and take precautions to avoid it."

The Sisyphus Trap — *Occurs anytime but most often arises at the results phase.*

"...the distinctive interaction between the uniquely challenging public sector operating system and the people who work in government. Though understanding the systems of government is critical to success, we also need to understand the people rolling the boulder up the hill, particularly how their behaviors are shaped by the culture in which they toil."

The Complacency Trap — *Occurs in the reevaluation phase.*

"...conditions change fast, but democracy changes slowly. The result is that programs need regular reevaluation. In some cases what is being done no longer makes sense. In other cases, how it is being done no longer makes sense. Too often, the way things are becomes a barrier to needed changes, particularly in the way the public sector deals with risk."

The Silo Trap — *Throughout the journey, throughout all the phases from ideas to results.*

"...is the failure to fit all the pieces together. Countless public undertakings underperform because participants fail to see the end-to-end process of reaching a result as a set of interdependent steps, and they behave accordingly."

What Price Government? (cont'd.. from p. 1)

Our Founding Fathers knew well the delicate balance between an individual's freedom to act and government coercion.

Hence, the vigilance of its citizenry to worry about government size and boundaries if for nothing else then the fact that government acts, in the end, through coercion and force.

Government functions are funded by its citizens through taxation. Taxes represent the price we are prepared to willingly pay for peace and prosperity, up to a point.

That point is reached when government no longer delivers on its promise which happens from time to time as history demonstrates.

In government, there is no adequate way to assess value because there is no economic calculation.

Recall that economic calculation refers to humans producing and trading only when they think it will yield something they want more than their time, money, effort, or other factors. For example, if you have a pencil that I want and I have a dollar which you want and if we agree to trade, we both get something of value. I do not have that choice in purchasing a license to drive my car. It is required whether I want to or not.

While greatly oversimplified, the essence of a market economy is made possible by economic calculation.

In a free market economy all producers' resources are focused on meeting and exceeding customer demand. If not, then someone else will, and you are out of business.

The customer — that is you and me — is king (or queen). The allegiance of the most successful companies in the world is exclusively focused on you and me, the customer. In this sense, we are their bosses. If Lean has taught us anything, it has taught that.

It is in this environment that the principles and methods we know as Lean thinking were created. Not only must a product create and satisfy a demand, but it must be made as cheaply and efficiently as possible, i.e. better, faster and cheaper than our competitors.

A modern market economy unleashes the creative potential of the human mind through innovation in product, service, and process. This accounts for the abundance we now enjoy and no doubt would be the envy of any of the wealthiest potentates of the past.

While necessity may be the mother of invention, creativity is the mother of innovation. Henry Ford once said, "If I asked my customers what they want they'd say a faster horse!" Innovation of necessity requires freedom to envision the future and, in turn, freedom enables human cooperation and collaboration, to create it.

In government, however, we are faced with a different problem: Since there is no economic calculation and no competition, there is no good way to assess value.

What Price Government? (cont'd. from prior page)

Quality is often what government says it is, not what the customer perceives it to be. Said another way, customers (citizens) more often than not have no other place to go to get what they need nor is there any mechanism to eliminate that which cannot meet their demands in a timely, efficiently, and effective way. Citizens, government's customers, are hostages in this regard.

This is how waste becomes endemic in government systems. The lack of economic calculation masks what government can or cannot do successfully because customer outcome and accountability is either missing, delayed, or denatured from intention.

Because government is an institution of systems and processes, the approaches and tools developed over the last 50 years in the private sector (i.e. Lean) can be successfully applied to them - this has been demonstrated by *Bend the Curve* and many other States' continuous improvement initiatives.

Lean principles and tools cannot be applied piecemeal, they must be applied systemically. Critical to their success, Leadership is required to reorganize not just physical departments, as is most often the case, but mindsets. We can do more with less.

A Lean government would be a smaller government, but what it gives up in size it can make up in less complexity (easier to use), more speed, and lower cost.

Of equal importance, waste endemic in government systems is production lost to the free market, our citizens. Money in the form of taxes is capital lost to the investment needed to drive job creation which in turn fosters the prosperity we seek as a state and a nation.

For this reason alone, the Lean revolution in government is critical because it is necessary to maintain prosperity by ensuring that taxpayers' dollars are valuably and efficaciously used.

A smaller and less costly government is one that continuously looks to improve its operations and services and requires the commitment of leadership to understand what W. Edwards Deming called *Profound Knowledge* - the interaction of systems, variation, and behavior. The mindset mentioned above.

Deming's ideas have evolved and been shaped into what we now call Lean thinking or, even better, the Science of Improvement. This knowledge and its application to government is well understood now.

One would hope that an office for the Science of Improvement would be an operational arm of government with the stated goal of driving the principles and methods of improvement to transform government to be better, faster, and cheaper.

Walter



Department of Health and Human Services

Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

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**More Miller
workshops &
next DOP 1
scheduled !**

*Additional workshops
with Ken Miller are still
being planned. We'll
keep you posted.*

*An introductory week-
long CI-P Bronze level
training DOP 1 is tenta-
tively scheduled for
February 6-10, 2012.*

*You can also check the
Bend the Curve Calen-
dar in Outlook's Public
Folders & come to the
planning meetings for
Clinicals and other
events.*

The primary purpose of the *Bend the Curve* Team is to provide support, consultation, assistance, and leadership in continuous improvement approaches and activities for State staff, work teams, and leaders as they seek to continually improve their work culture, systems, processes, and environments – in order to meet the mission of Maine State government and the expectations of Maine citizens.

We're on the net !

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/btc>

**Bend
the Curve**

Continuous Improvement Practitioners: BTC Intervention Facilitation Status

DHHS		DOL		DAFS	
Kate D. Carnes	C-L	Jorge A. Acero	C-O	Wendy Christian	I-O
Nancy Cronin	C-O	Michael T. Brooker	I-O	Rebecca S. Greene	I-L
Marcel Gagne	LCL	Deidre A. Coleman	I-O	Lyndon R. Hamm	I-LCL
Julita Klavins	L	Joan A. Cook	LL	Billy J. Ladd	I-LCL
Walter E. Lowell	L	Merle A. Davis	L	Michaela T. Loisel	I-L
Jerrold Melville	LCL	Eric Dibner	O	DOC	
Ann O'Brien	L	Peter D. Diplock	I-O	Gloria R. Payne	I-O
Cheryl Ring	C-LCL	Brenda G. Drummond	I-O	DOT	
Terry Sandusky	L	Anita C. Dunham	I-LCL	Michael Burns	C-O
Bonnie Tracy	C-O	Karen D. Fraser	C-L	Jessica Glidden	I-O
		Timothy J. Griffin	L	Rick Jeselskis	I-O
Sec.of State-BMW		Gaetane S. Johnson	I-O	Robert McFerren	I-O
Scott Thompson	O	Michael J. Johnson	O	Sam McKeeman	C-O
OPEGA, Legislature		James J. McManus	I-LCL	Jeffrey Naum	I-O
Matthew K. Kruk	I-O	Scott R. Neumeyer	I-O	Mark S. Tolman	I-O
Univ. of Maine		John L. Rioux	L	DEP	
Kim Jenkins	O	Sheryl J. Smith	C-O	Carmel A. Rubin	I-O
Community — Private Sector *					
Rae-Ann Brann*	I-L	James Fussell*	I-LL	Henry B. McIntyre*	LCL
Stephen C. Crate*	I-O	Kelly Grenier*	LL	Jack Nicholas*	I-O
Arthur S. Davis*	L	Alicia Kellogg*	I-O	Anne Rogerson*	O
Nancy Desisto*	L	Maayan L. Lahti*	I-O	Clough Toppan*	LCL
Jane French*	I-L				
Town of Durham, New Hampshire					
		David Kurz	I-O	Steve McCusker	I-O
		Michael Lynch	I-O	Todd Selig	C-O
* Community CI-P		I - Inactive	C - "Champion for Lean" - not facilitating		
L - Lead (LL-Learning)		LCL - Learning Co-Lead		O - Learning Observer	